

EGIB

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EGIB

25X

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

11 September 1968

Trends in the Vietnam ProblemMilitary Developments

1. After a relatively slow week, the pace of Communist military activity in South Vietnam is again picking up, especially in III Corps. Bad weather in the northern provinces and allied spoiling operations have hampered enemy activity elsewhere, but most Communist main force units still seem intent on further offensive activity. Major elements are preparing for combat south of the Demilitarized Zone and near the major cities of coastal I Corps. Up to three enemy regiments continue to pose a threat to Duc Lap and the provincial capital of Ban (Me) Thuot in Southwestern II Corps. There appears to be no imminent threat to Saigon, even though small-scale probes and renewed shellings could come at any time. Terrorism in the capital has been stepped up sharply, as well as in some rural areas of the country.

The Political Picture

2. The Paris talks took a potentially significant turn during the past week with the initiation of secret discussions between the top principals of the two sides. Le Duc Tho's initial presentation last Saturday offered no grounds for optimism that the Communists are prepared to compromise their stand on the bombing issue. Instead, Tho seemed determined in this new environment to convince the US that the war can only be concluded if the US makes concessions.

3. The North Vietnamese agreement to hold such talks regularly and the general scenario for them outlined by Tho and Xuan Thuy, however, suggest the Communists may be moving toward more frank and wide-ranging exchanges than have occurred to date. Tho's statement that "tens of thousands" of Vietnamese who went North after 1954 have returned to fight in South Vietnam is a much more explicit admission on this issue than anything Hanoi has said before. His statement that he will first spell out Communist views and that the US should then present its ideas for a "general settlement" at least suggests a readiness to begin grappling with thorny political issues even before a bombing cessation. A few more sessions will be required, however, before it is apparent whether the Communists are ready to tip their hand a bit or whether they are simply planning to sit out the talks until after the elections.

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Content NO

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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

23 October 1968

Trends in the Vietnam ProblemMilitary Developments

1. The pace of ground fighting in South Vietnam continued to slacken this week. Additional main force enemy units were spotted moving into base areas and border sanctuaries to rest and refit. Communist local and guerrilla units maintained limited pressure on allied forces with scattered shellings, interdictions of supply routes, and other small-scale harassments. Allied combat deaths for the week ending 19 October, however, were the lowest in more than a year.

2. There are no sure indications of enemy preparations for another large-scale, coordinated offensive, but there are several signs of more limited offensive activity planned for the near future. One high threat area is western Pleiku Province, where elements of an NVA regiment are converging on two remote Special Forces camp. Another is northern III Corps, where the headquarters of the North Vietnamese 1st Division recently made an unprecedented move from the highlands of II Corps. [redacted] suggest a renewal of fighting is planned for III Corps in the first half of November, and a similar time frame for new offensive activity is suggested by some intelligence reports from the coastal areas of the northern provinces.

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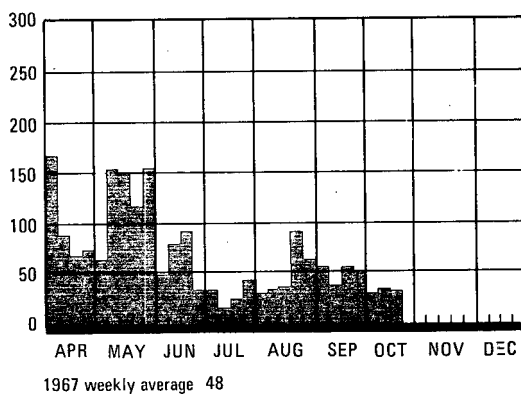
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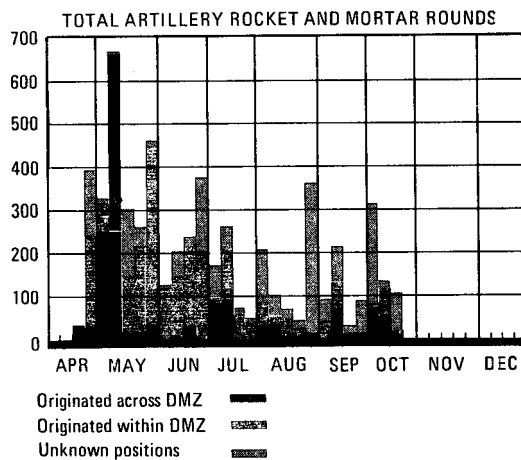
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# **COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968**

## **Enemy Initiated Attacks**



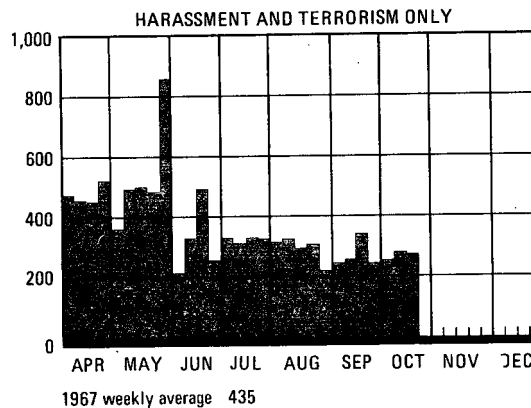
## **Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area**



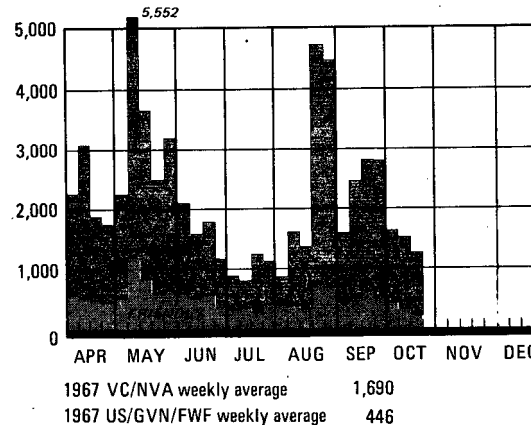
Information as of 19 October 1968

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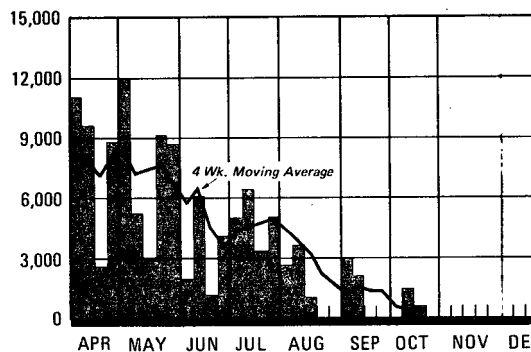
## **Enemy Initiated Incidents**



## **Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action**



## **Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\***



\*This graph does not depict the arrival of enemy infiltrators in South Vietnam

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

16 October 1968

Trends in the Vietnam Problem

Military Developments

1. The Communists' so-called third offensive has ended. Both large-unit and, to a lesser degree, guerrilla actions have tapered off as the ground fighting has settled into a new lull. Over 40 percent of Communist main force units are now resting and rebuilding in base areas, border sanctuaries, and out-of-country havens.

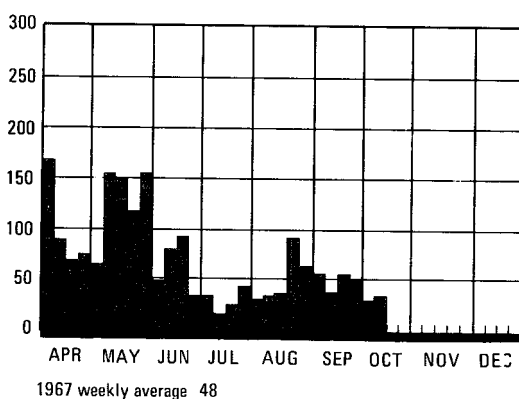
2. There are a number of indications, however, that a new round of Communist military activity may be scheduled to take place in a few weeks. A growing number of reports mention a "fourth offensive" or the "winter-spring campaign." Although the reports are by no means uniform, most suggest that the enemy intends to open a new offensive phase in late October or early November to coincide with the US elections. According to most sources this upcoming round will consist of light attacks or feints against major cities, combined with a vigorous campaign of terror, sabotage, and hit-and-run guerrilla raids in the countryside.

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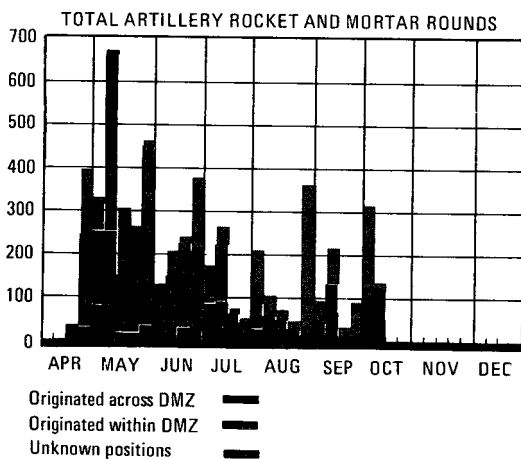
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## COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968

**Enemy Initiated Attacks**



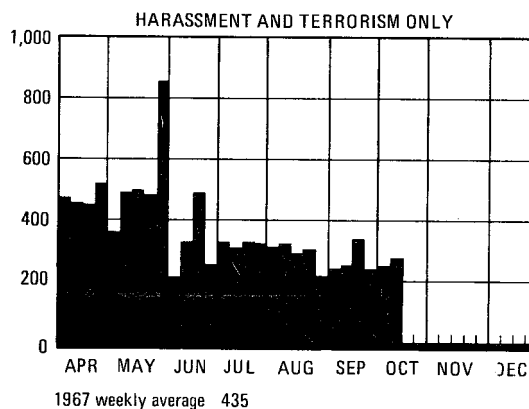
**Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area**



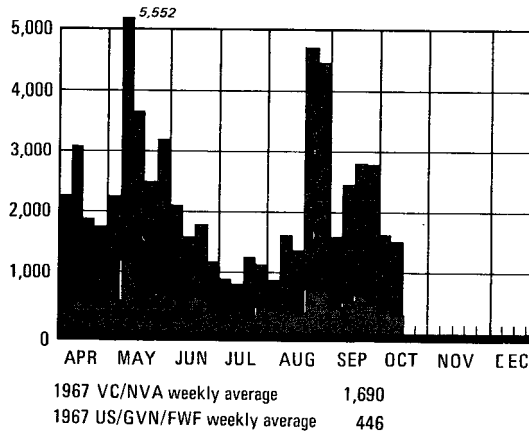
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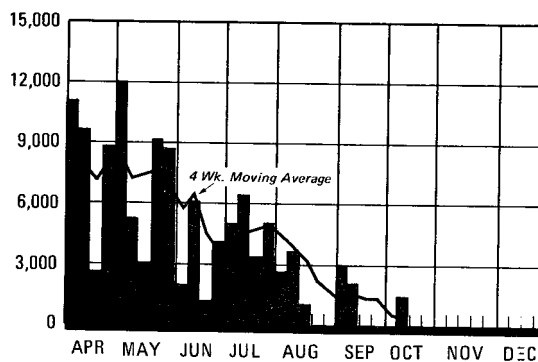
**Enemy Initiated Incidents**



**Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action**



**Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\***



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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

9 October 1968

Trends in the Vietnam ProblemMilitary Developments

1. Communist forces avoided significant contact this week and continued to move some regimental level units away from forward combat zones. In the eastern and central DMZ, [redacted] heavy artillery was being withdrawn northward. Farther south some enemy units in coastal Quang Nam disengaged westward. In the Saigon area elements of two of the three mainline Communist divisions in III Corps shifted northward to positions along the Cambodian border.

2. In all cases, the pull-back is limited. Sufficient main force units remain in some primary combat areas to resume operations with little warning. The current withdrawals appear to be aimed, as they were last summer, at affording Communist units an opportunity to regroup and refit. In fact, two units which were withdrawn into Cambodia in September have now returned to South Vietnam and have positioned themselves near the Duc Lap Special Forces Camp.

The Political Picture

3. Whether the enemy's military actions had any political significance is not apparent. Hanoi's negotiators in Paris appeared to adopt a cautious attitude this week, perhaps in connection with new instructions from Hanoi. [redacted]

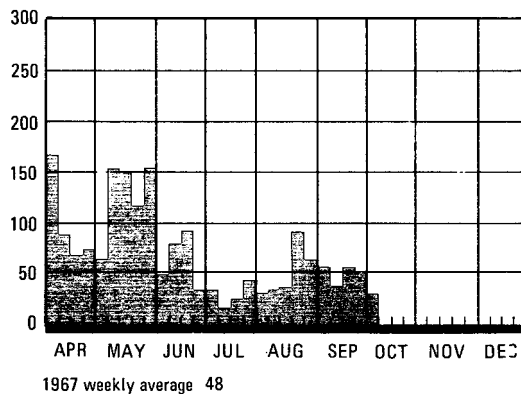
4. There has been speculation that the North Vietnamese actions were intended to help create a climate conducive to American concessions on the bombing issue. The North Vietnamese reportedly hoped that the US stand would soften soon. Meanwhile, the enemy's public statements show no give in Hanoi's own stand. Xuan Thuy's formal presentation at the official session on Wednesday constituted a routine denunciation of US "delaying tactics" in Paris. He closed with an appeal to President Johnson to open the door to a just settlement.

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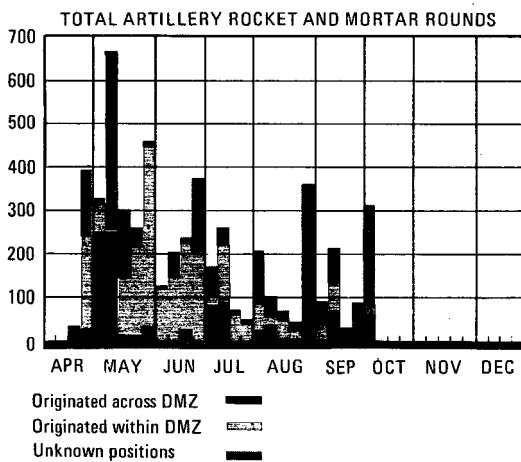


# COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968

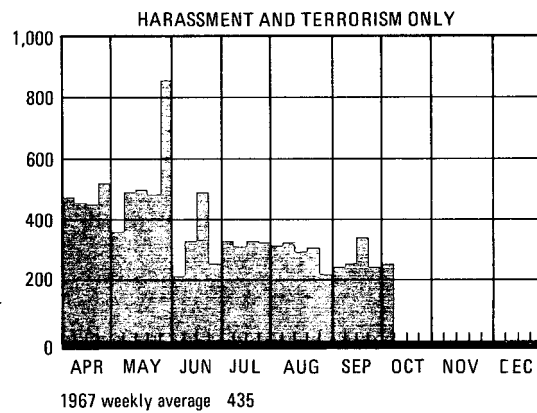
## Enemy Initiated Attacks



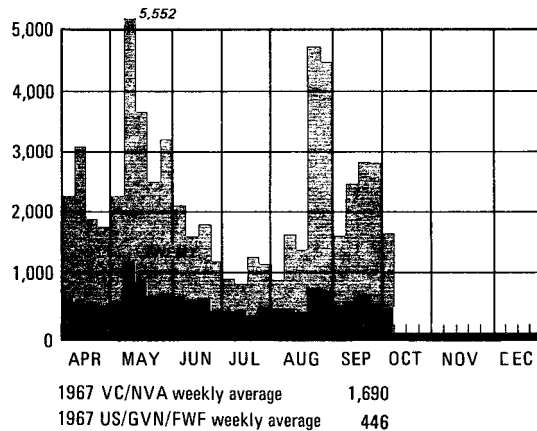
## Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area



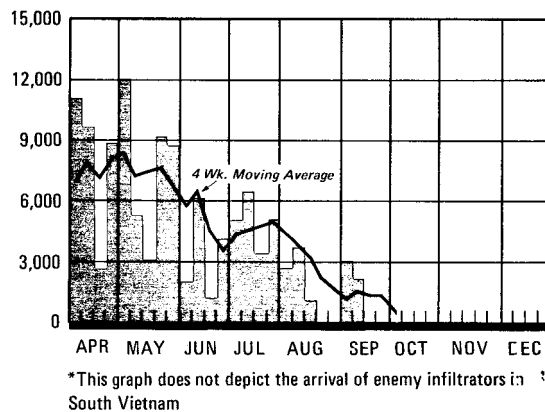
## Enemy Initiated Incidents



## Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action



## Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\*



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[REDACTED] 25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

2 October 1968

Trends in the Vietnam Problem

Military Developments

1. Communist military activity this week continued to emphasize economy-of-force tactics against allied targets of secondary importance. The most significant enemy action--the seige of Thuong Duc Special Forces camp guarding the southwestern approaches to Da Nang--was typical of the tactics which have characterized the current offensive round since its inception in mid-August. Elements of three North Vietnamese regiments attacked the allied base hoping to force large-scale allied troop deployments away from the major Communist objective, Da Nang.

2. Allied spoiling operations, coupled with the seriously disruptive effects of recent tropical storms, have probably at least played a part in a major shift of enemy forces now underway in the far northern provinces. In the DMZ area, some elements of the North Vietnamese 320th Division have withdrawn to sanctuaries north of the buffer zone. In Military Region Tri-Thien-Hue, elements of at least four North Vietnamese regiments [REDACTED] have retired to safe havens in the Lao panhandle.

The Political Picture

3. There has been a lull in the private meetings in Paris after some three weeks of intensive dialogue. At the last meeting on the 20th, Le Duc Tho interpreted the US request that Hanoi agree to the eventual inclusion of Saigon in the talks as a demand for reciprocity and refused to discuss the issue. The Vietnamese delegation took the same line at the tea break on the 25th and said they had no interest in further private contacts until one side or the other had something new to offer. They said they were not willing to discuss Saigon's participation before a complete bombing halt, but left their post-bombing position ambiguous.

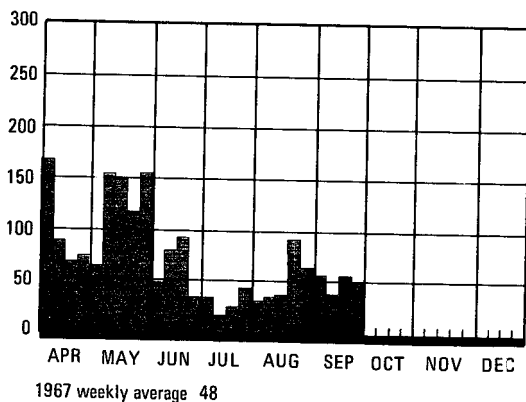
4. The Vietnamese also rejected Vice President Humphrey's 30 September statement on the bombing as another demand for reciprocity. At the public Wednesday session, Xuan Thuy implied that the Vice President's position was even harder than President Johnson's because it threatened to resume the bombing if Hanoi did not respect the DMZ.

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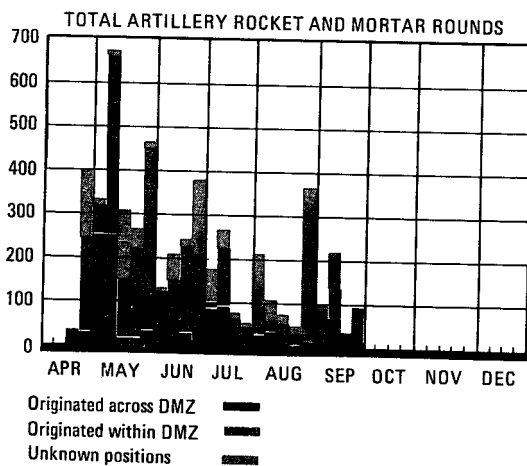
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## COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968

**Enemy Initiated Attacks**



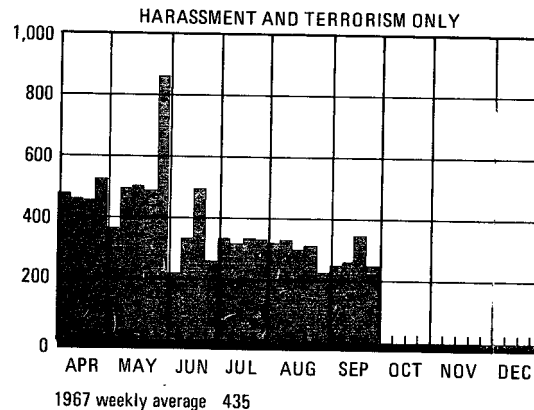
**Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area**



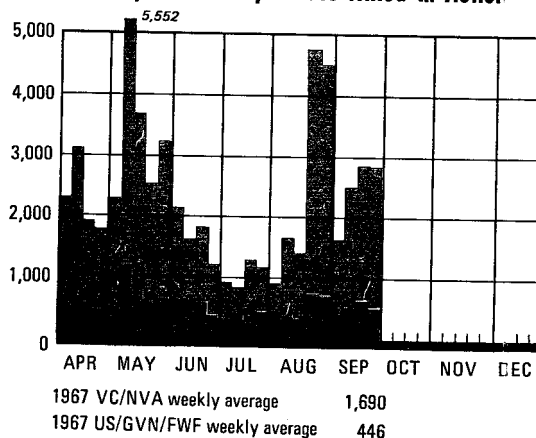
Information as of 28 September 1968

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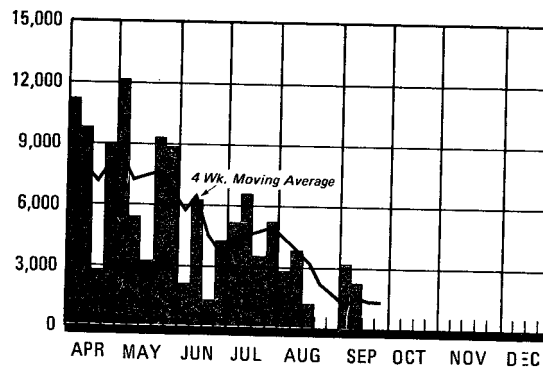
**Enemy Initiated Incidents**



**Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action**



**Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\***



\*This graph does not depict the arrival of enemy infiltrators in South Vietnam

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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

25 September 1968

Trends in the Vietnam ProblemMilitary Developments

1. The Communists continued their attempt to keep up military pressure this week with a series of relatively small-scale actions. The main effort involved a well-coordinated series of mortar and rocket attacks against major allied targets in I and II Corps. Meanwhile, allied spoiling operations continued to undercut the ability of the large enemy units to mass for ground attacks. Disruption of the enemy logistic apparatus was also especially successful this week, with large caches uncovered by allied units in the DMZ area and northwest of Saigon.

2. In the two northern coastal provinces, the enemy has apparently been hurt so badly by supply shortages and allied counteroperations that he has pulled back several of his units to the Laotian border sector probably for resupply and refitting. The action substantially degrades his capacity to launch large operations in the coastal areas of these provinces for the time being.

The Political Picture

3. After some weeks of inaction, the private exchanges in Paris seem to be moving again. As of 20 September, the dialogue over a bombing halt seemed to have narrowed down to two conditions required of the North Vietnamese: reciprocity in the DMZ and the admission of the GVN to the post-bombing talks. Hanoi still appears determined to reject any US conditions, however. It may believe that the current Communist military pressure in the South, although far less effective than desired, will bring about a softening of the US position at Paris, especially if further antiwar pressure in the US develops prior to the presidential elections.

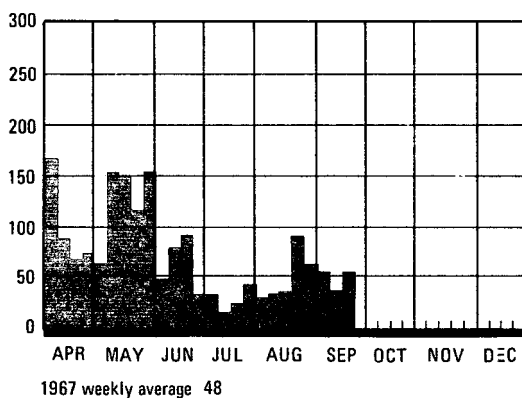
4. They apparently hope, moreover, to produce additional foreign pressures on Washington in the coming weeks. This now seems to have been the primary purpose of the recent North Vietnamese mission to Oslo. Although reporting on the talks there is not yet complete, it does not appear that the North Vietnamese promised anything tangible in the way of a deal on a bombing halt beyond their past vague offers of serious discussions during the post-bombing period. Their presentation seems to have been a standard propagandistic defense on the "reasonableness" of their stand at Paris.

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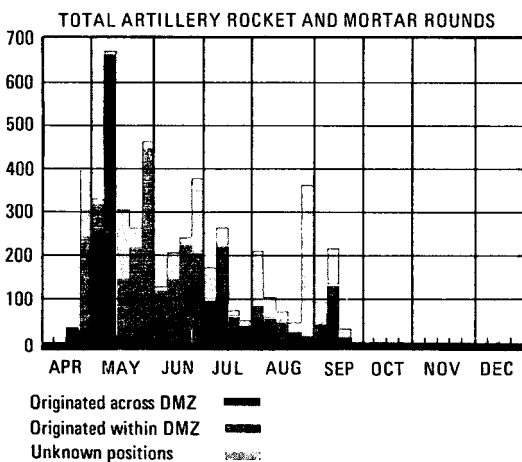
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# COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968

Enemy Initiated Attacks

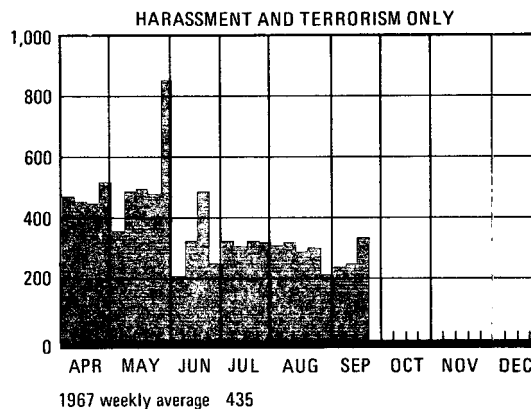


Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area

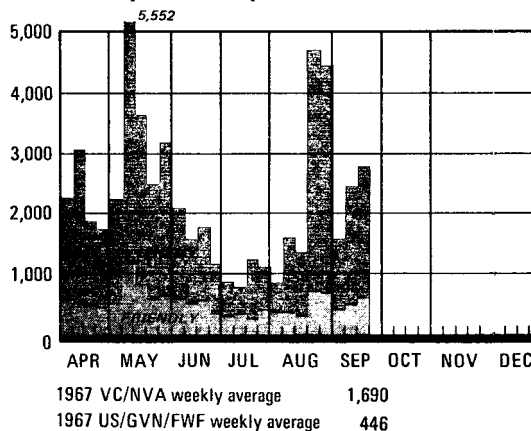


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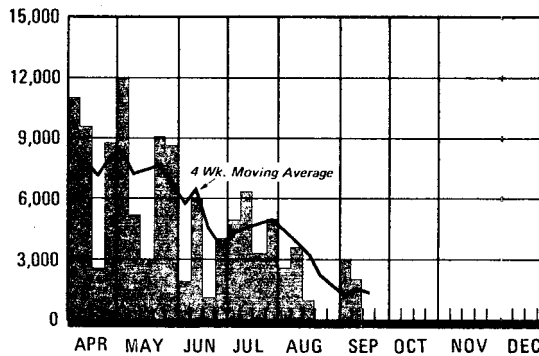
Enemy Initiated Incidents



Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action



Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\*



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[REDACTED] 25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

18 September 1968

Trends in the Vietnam Problem

Military Developments

1. Communist military activity regained momentum this week, especially in South Vietnam's I and III Corps. The focus of enemy efforts has been mainly on the more remote allied positions and installations, rather than urban centers, however.

2. Elements of at least two North Vietnamese divisions just south of the Demilitarized Zone launched a series of strong attacks on US positions this week. Heavy fighting also erupted in coastal I Corps, but large enemy losses in the initial encounters may limit the Communist potential for immediate follow-on action. The Communists also kept up their pace in the provinces north and northwest of Saigon in an attempt to draw allied units away from the capital area. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] except for a rise in terrorist activity, the capital has remained relatively unscathed so far in this offensive round.

The Political Picture

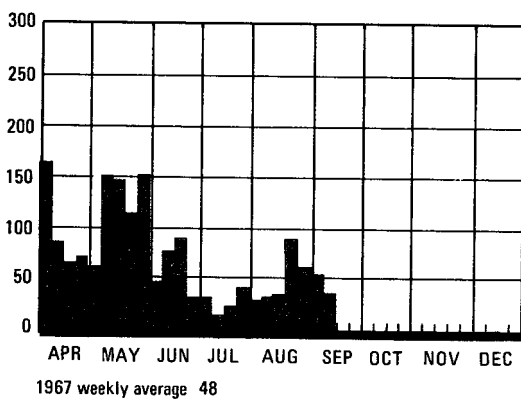
3. Le Duc Tho expressed "great interest" in Harriman's presentation of US proposals for mutual troop withdrawals and de-escalation in the Demilitarized Zone at the 15 September private session in Paris. He refused to be drawn out on the specifics of this or any other issue prior to a full bombing halt, however. Thus, the North Vietnamese are standing pat on rejecting the concept of reciprocity for a bombing halt and their behavior so far suggests they are unlikely to give any ground on this issue in the near future.

4. Communist political tactics are still designed to encourage a unilateral US move on the bombing issue. Tho's new proposal that talks on an agenda should begin the day after a bombing halt and his repeated assurances that post-bombing discussions would prove to be "positive" and "serious" are the kind of verbal enticements the Communists have used before to encourage a halt without binding Hanoi to specific measures of military restraint. No more explicit commitments are likely at this stage.

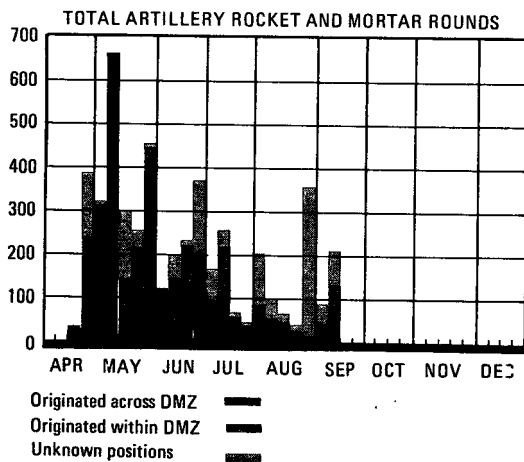
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# **COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968**

## **Enemy Initiated Attacks**



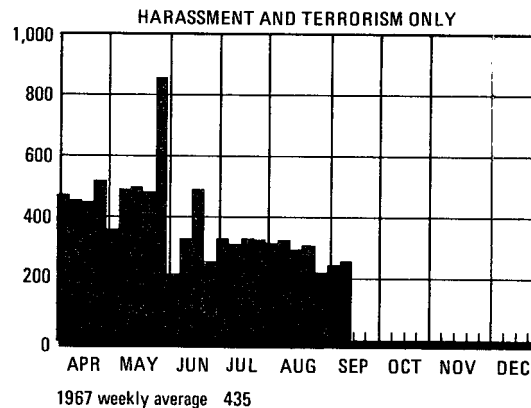
## **Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area**



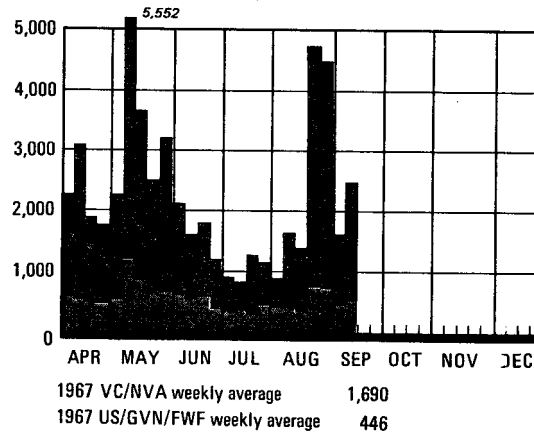
Information as of 14 September 1968

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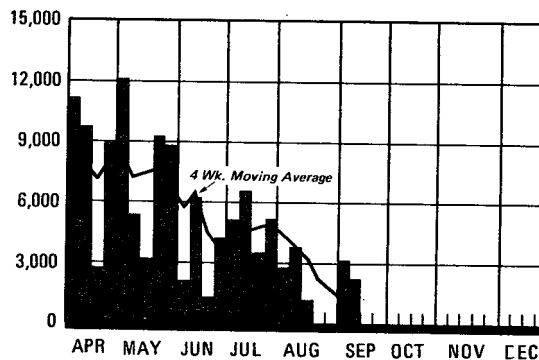
## **Enemy Initiated Incidents**



## **Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action**



## **Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\***



\*This graph does not depict the arrival of enemy infiltrators in South Vietnam

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

30 October 1968

Trends in the Vietnam Problem

The Military Situation

1. A low level of enemy activity was again reflected in this week's battle statistics; nearly every category showed a decline from the previous week. Stepped up shellings of remote allied installations in the western highlands and in the provinces near Saigon probably were staged by local and guerrilla forces in an effort to maintain at least limited pressure while Communist main force units continued to rest and refit.

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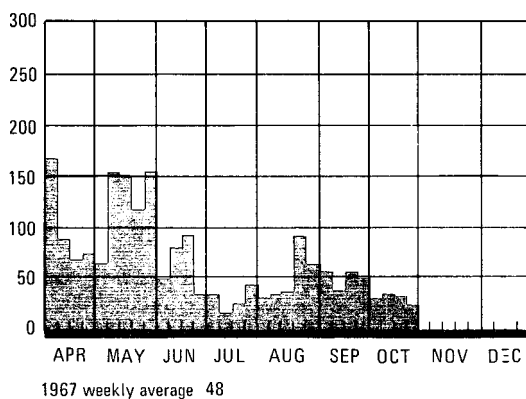
3. Additional evidence of Communist plans to resume major offensive operations was also picked up this week. Most indications point toward early November as the starting point for this year's winter-spring campaign.

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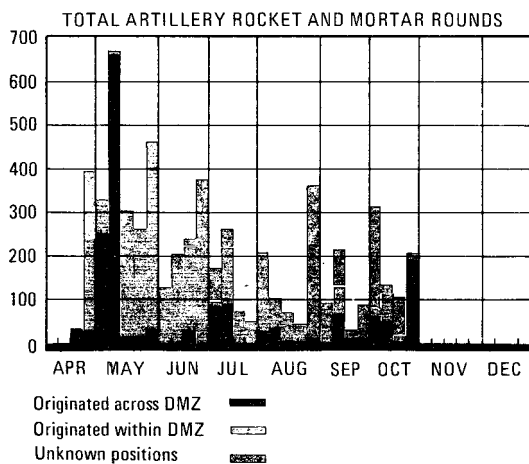
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## COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968

### Enemy Initiated Attacks



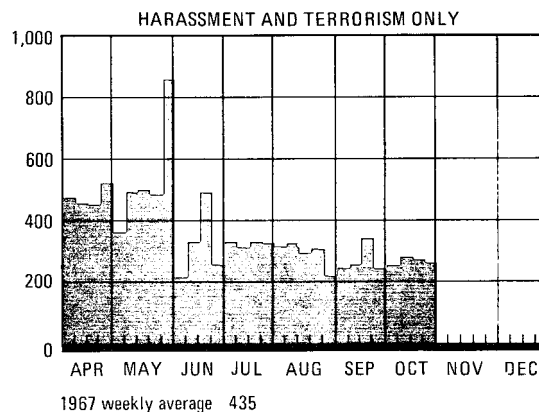
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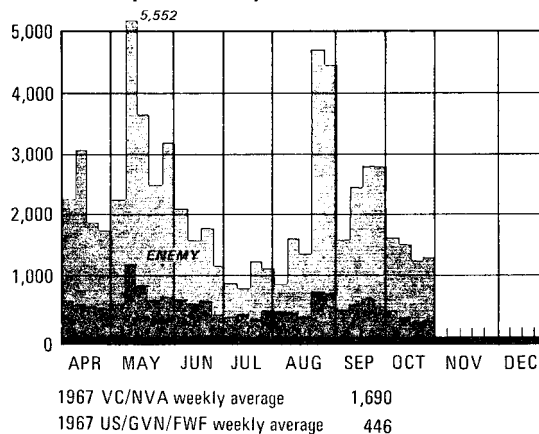
Information as of 26 October 1968

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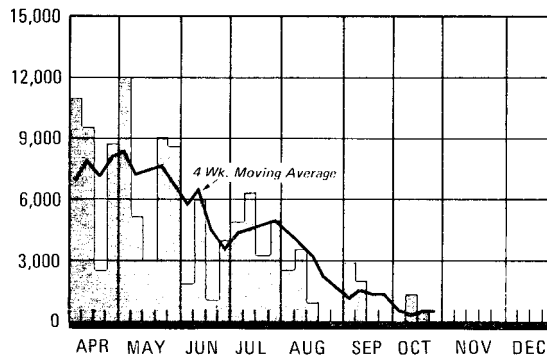
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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**11 September 1968**

**Trends in the Vietnam Problem**

**Military Developments**

1. After a relatively slow week, the pace of Communist military activity in South Vietnam is again picking up, especially in III Corps. Bad weather in the northern provinces and allied spoiling operations have hampered enemy activity elsewhere, but most Communist main force units still seem intent on further offensive activity. Major elements are preparing for combat south of the Demilitarized Zone and near the major cities of coastal I Corps. Up to three enemy regiments continue to pose a threat to Duc Lap and the provincial capital of Ban Me Thuot in Southwestern II Corps. There appears to be no imminent threat to Saigon, even though small-scale probes and renewed shellings could come at any time. Terrorism in the capital has been stepped up sharply, as well as in some rural areas of the country.

**The Political Picture**

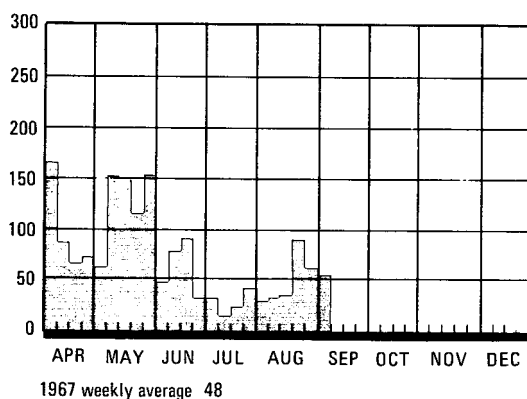
2. The Paris talks took a potentially significant turn during the past week with the initiation of secret discussions between the top principals of the two sides. Le Duc Tho's initial presentation last Saturday offered no grounds for optimism that the Communists are prepared to compromise their stand on the bombing issue. Instead, Tho seemed determined in this new environment to convince the US that the war can only be concluded if the US makes concessions.

3. The North Vietnamese agreement to hold such talks regularly and the general scenario for them, outlined by Tho and Xuan Thuy, however, suggest the Communists may be moving toward more frank and wide-ranging exchanges than have occurred to date. Tho's statement that "tens of thousands" of Vietnamese who went North after 1954 have returned to fight in South Vietnam is a much more explicit admission on this issue than anything Hanoi has said before. His statement that he will first spell out Communist views and that the US should then present its ideas for a "general settlement" at least suggests a readiness to begin grappling with thorny political issues even before a bombing cessation. A few more sessions will be required, however, before it is apparent whether the Communists are ready to tip their hand a bit or whether they are simply planning to sit out the talks until after the elections.

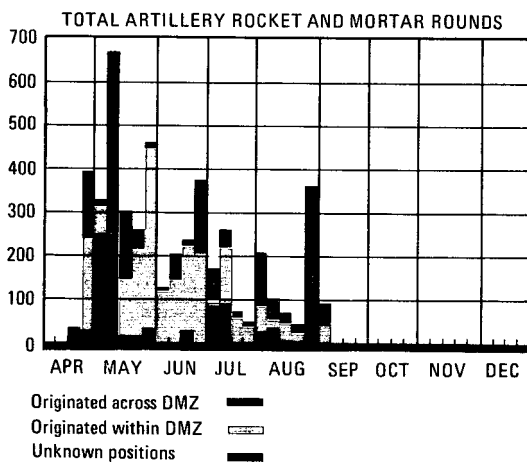
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# **COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968**

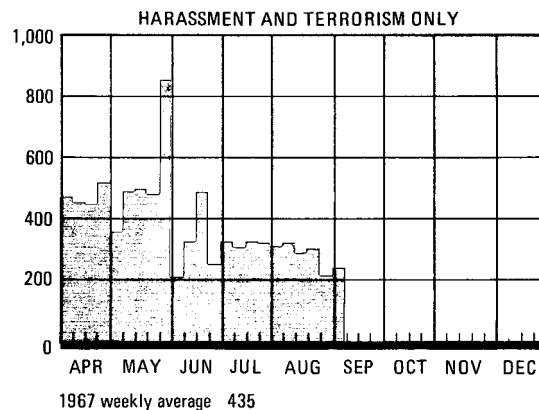
## **Enemy Initiated Attacks**



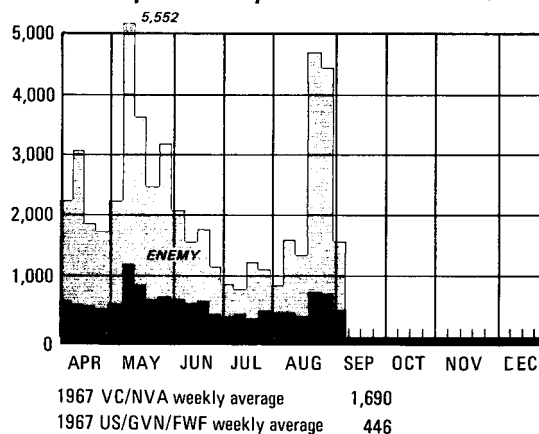
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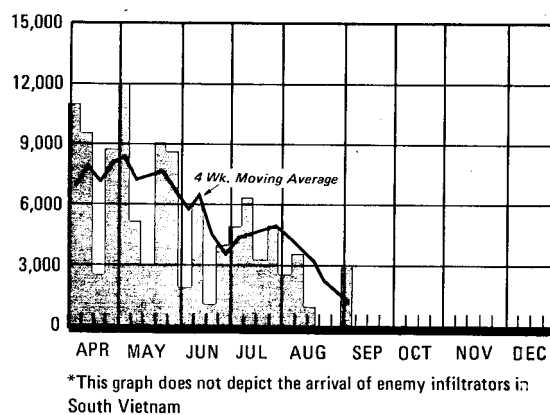
## **Enemy Initiated Incidents**



## **Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action**



## **Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\***





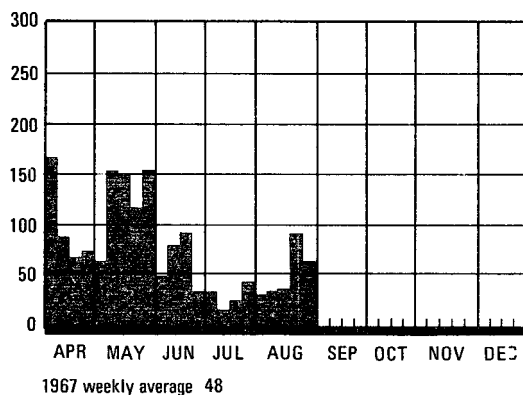
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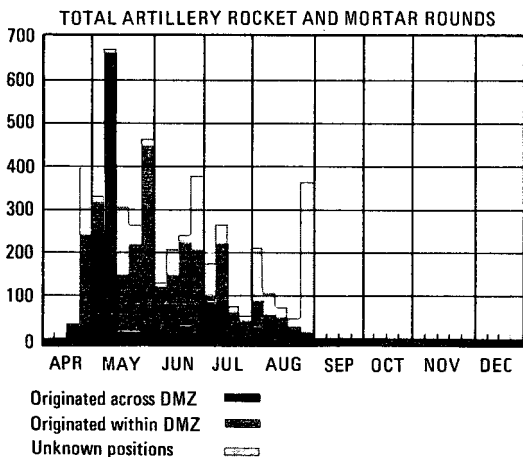
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## COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968

Enemy Initiated Attacks

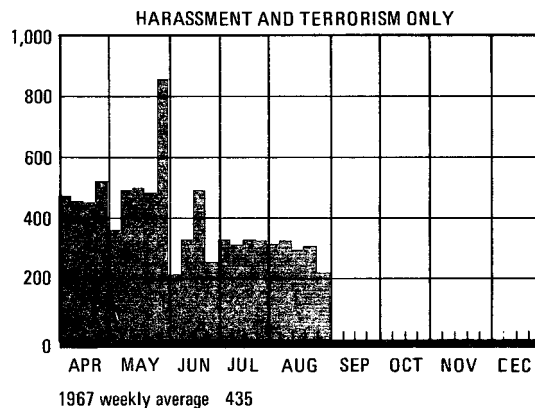


Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area

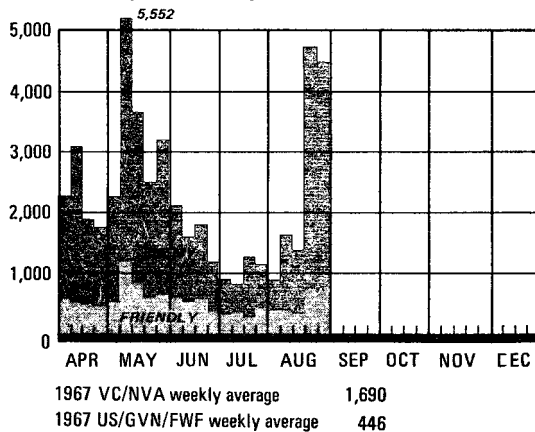


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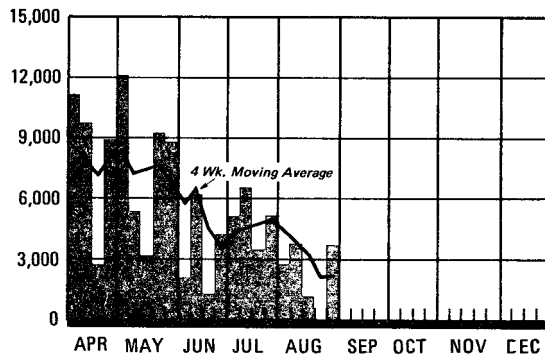
Enemy Initiated Incidents



Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action



Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\*



\*This graph does not depict the arrival of enemy infiltrators in South Vietnam

25X1

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**4 September 1968**

**Trends in the Vietnam Problem**

**Military Developments**

1. Enemy forces continued efforts to sustain their offensive during the past week with a number of mortar and rocket attacks and ground assaults. Despite widespread indications that major attacks might occur against some of the primary urban targets, no such attacks were forthcoming. There is considerable evidence that allied operations thwarted enemy attack plans in several key areas.

2. The Communists still seem bent on pressing their offensive in selected urban areas when and where they can. Extensive enemy reconnaissance has been detected recently in the immediate vicinity of Saigon and sizeable Communist units continue to threaten other known Communist objectives. The available evidence suggests that the Communists are trying to wage a prolonged campaign characterized by widespread shellings and attempts at ground assaults in and around key urban targets.

3. Infiltration groups entering the pipeline in August appear to be down substantially from preceding months; in fact, up until now we have no record of any groups departing since 10 August. The information on August infiltration is probably incomplete as yet, however. Thus no conclusive judgment on the total number or on the significance of the infiltration pattern is possible now.

**The Political Picture**

4. The only significant North Vietnamese development on negotiations during the week was made in the course of Premier Pham Van Dong's lengthy National Day speech on 2 September. In detailing Communist terms for a settlement, the Premier said that the US must "recognize and talk" with the Liberation Front about problems in South Vietnam. This language is reminiscent of earlier Communist demands that the Front be recognized as the "sole" representative of the South Vietnamese, but the Premier avoided such categorical terms. He also omitted the frequent demand that a settlement must be in accordance with the Front's program or that the South Vietnamese had to settle their own affairs without "foreign" interference.

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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**28 August 1968**

**Trends in the Vietnam Problem**

**Military Developments**

1. The scope of the current enemy offensive activity expanded into the central and northern part of South Vietnam during the past week, before beginning a gradual decline to a point where no major new Communist thrusts have been launched during the past few days. The pattern of the attacks followed closely the strategy applied during the initial assaults northwest of Saigon and in the delta in which the Communists operated with considerably greater deliberation and economy of force than in the offensive rounds early in May and at Tet.

2. Whether the relatively light action so far will be succeeded by heavy assaults against primary urban targets such as Saigon and the northern coastal cities is still uncertain. It is clear that the Communists still hope to hit these targets hard in the current round and are still attempting to position forces for the attacks. Allied counteroperations, however, have been very successful so far in blocking the enemy from major attacks and may force the Communists to postpone at least temporarily their effort.

**The Political Picture**

3. While their military offensive unfolded, the Communists continued to mark time in Paris, apparently awaiting clarification of domestic political developments in the US and the impact on American policy of the current military action in Vietnam. There was no give evident in the Communists' position in either the public or private contacts between US and North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris this week. In a private conversation on 26 August, the Hanoi representatives again displayed no interest in the American two-phase formula on a halt to the bombing.

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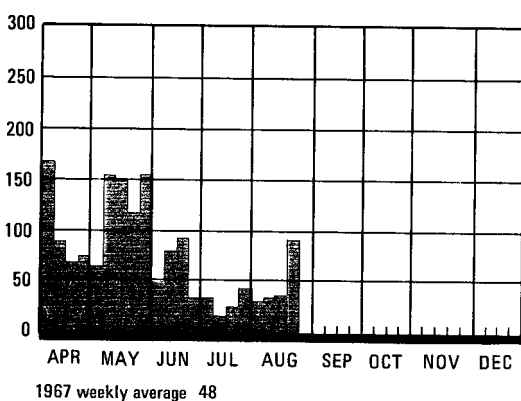
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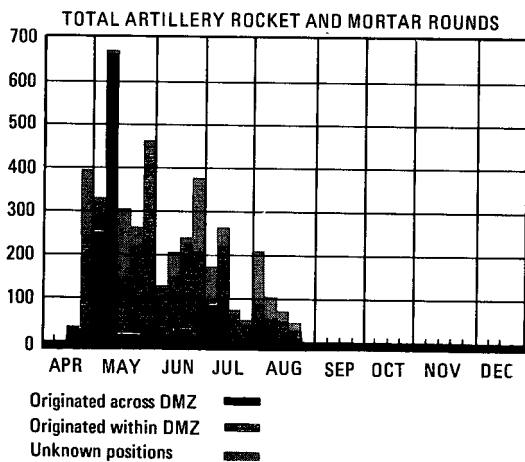
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# COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968

## Enemy Initiated Attacks



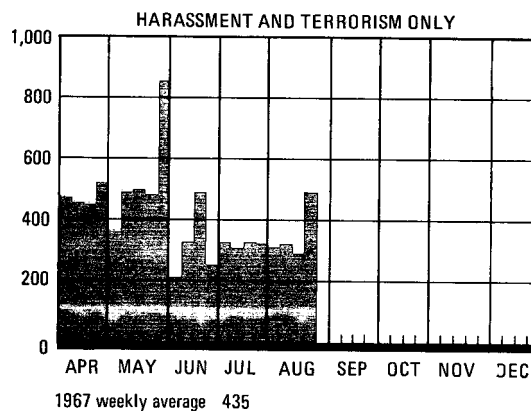
## Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area



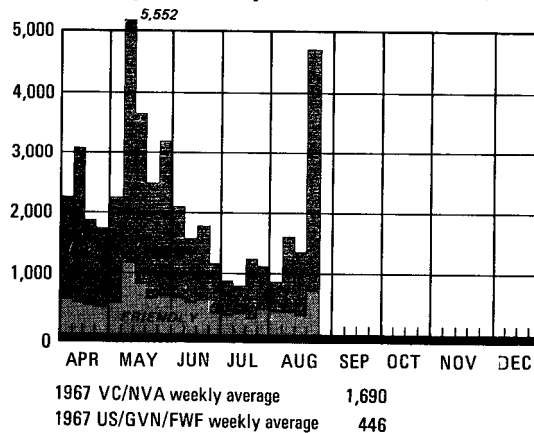
Information as of 24 August 1968

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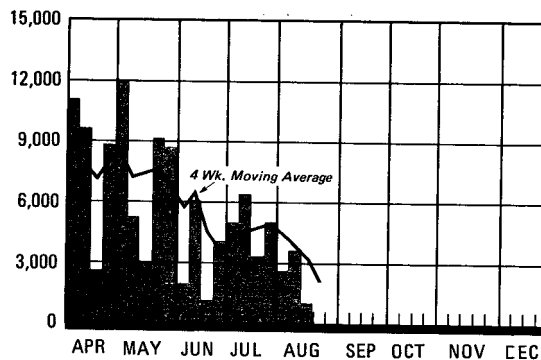
## Enemy Initiated Incidents



## Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action



## Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\*



\*This graph does not depict the arrival of enemy infiltrators in South Vietnam

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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**21 August 1968**

**Trends in the Vietnam Problem**

**Military Developments**

1. The series of Communist attacks launched during the past week appear to be preliminary rounds in a larger Communist offensive which has been in preparation for the past two months. Vietnamese Communist propaganda is still playing recent attacks in low key and has not tried to portray current efforts as part of the so-called "third phase" offensive. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Communist forces are in the final stages of attack preparations in many areas and that major offensive actions will be attempted in several parts of the country in the near future.

2. The scope of future enemy offensive plans is not clear. [REDACTED] the Communists are moving toward a countrywide offensive in the near future. Communist activity in the past week has fallen well short of an all-out effort, probably in part because of allied counter-operations, and because of enemy attempts to achieve a better stage of combat readiness than in past offensives. Hanoi probably hopes, however, that even limited attacks will have an important political impact in demonstrating that strong Communist forces are still in the field and capable of offensive action.

**The Political Picture**

3. The Communists added nothing new to their political stance in the past week. The upsurge of fighting in South Vietnam and the continued absence of Communist interest in substantive discussions in Paris, even after Le Duc Tho's return, reinforced earlier indications that Hanoi has lost hope of obtaining US concessions on the bombing issue in the near future.

4. In another secret session with Ambassador Vance on 19 August, Ha Van Lau took a totally uncompromising line. His approach suggests that Hanoi is not prepared at this point for any serious discussion of the US two-phase package approach to the bombing issue. The Communists appear to have concluded that they must demonstrate an ability to frustrate US objectives in South Vietnam through stepped up military activity before they can hope to obtain US concessions in Paris.

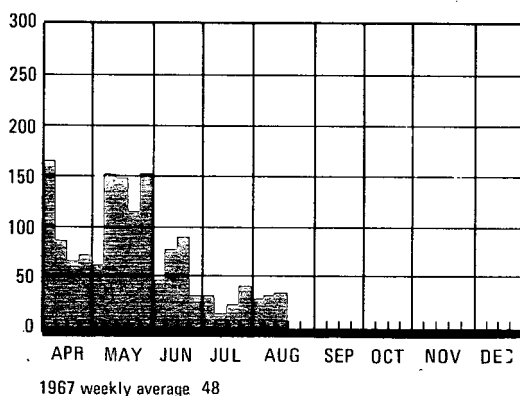
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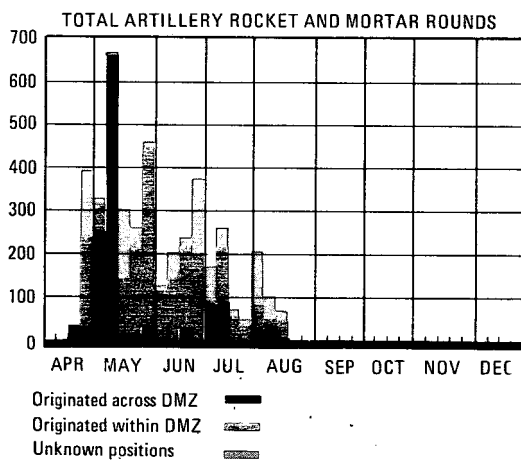


# **COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968**

**Enemy Initiated Attacks**



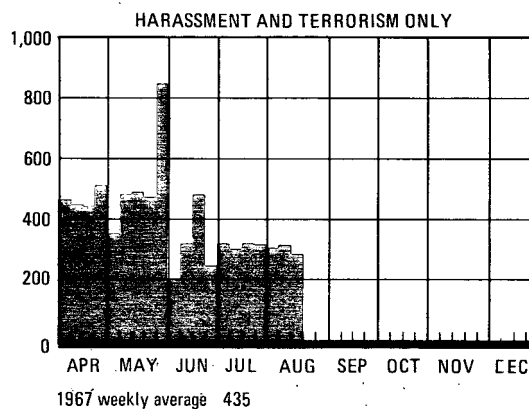
**Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area**



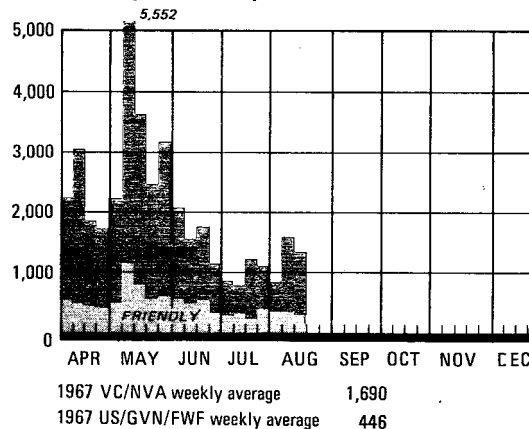
Information as of 17 August 1968

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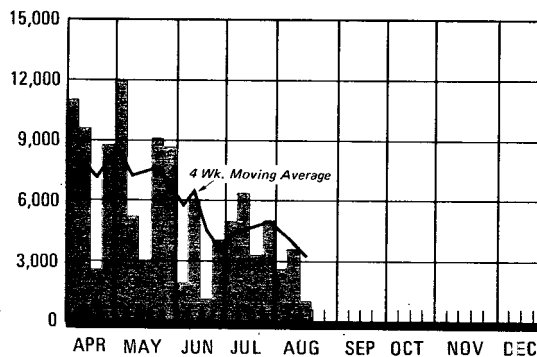
**Enemy Initiated Incidents**



**Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action**



**Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\***



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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

14 August 1968

Trends in the Vietnam ProblemMilitary Developments

1. The pattern of enemy-initiated military activity and offensive preparations during the past week remained essentially unchanged. Communist forces continued to avoid major engagements throughout most of South Vietnam, although the week saw a number of sizeable allied-initiated battles and a battalion-size enemy attack in northwestern III Corps.

2. Indications of enemy preparations for a major country-wide offensive continued to accumulate. The planned offensive apparently has encountered repeated delays, but attacks against many targets could begin at any time. Intelligence reporting during the past week suggests, however, that the Communists hope to initiate country-wide attacks on or shortly after 19 August.

The Political Picture

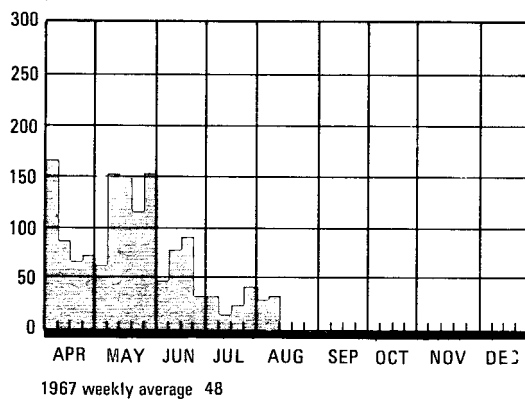
3. Current Communist political action seems designed in part to orchestrate a period of stepped-up enemy military pressure. At the 14 August session of the Paris talks, chief negotiator Xuan Thuy appeared to take the position that the Communists were now free to proceed with major military action since the US had failed to take advantage of their recent "restraint". According to Thuy, the US has clearly seen Hanoi's "good will" and "thus has had a good opportunity" to find a way toward peace.

4. Meanwhile, Le Duc Tho's return to Paris suggests that any renewal of military action could be accompanied by some new North Vietnamese political overtures, or at least maneuvers, designed to bring about concessions on the bombing issue. Moreover, although Hanoi appears to have rebuilt its combat posture in the South, it probably could hold back the final attack orders if it believed the action would be advantageous.

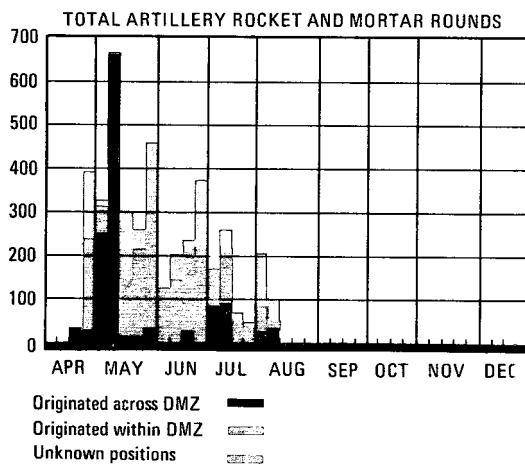
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# **COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968**

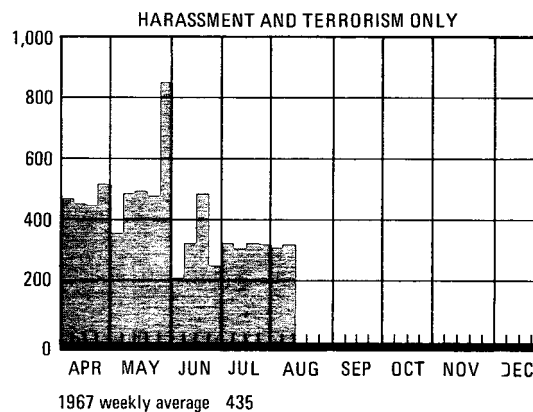
**Enemy Initiated Attacks**



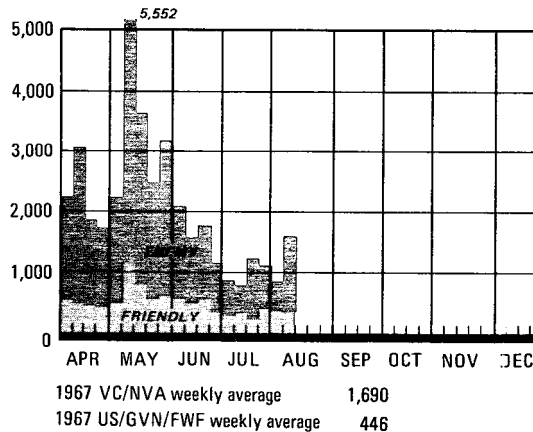
**Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area**



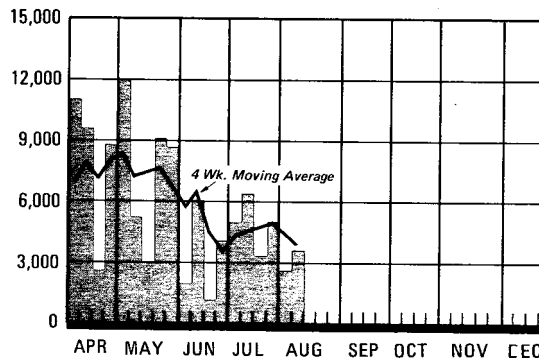
**Enemy Initiated Incidents**



**Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action**



**Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\***



\*This graph does not depict the arrival of enemy infiltrators in South Vietnam

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
7 August 1968

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Trends in the Vietnam ProblemMilitary Developments

1. Enemy-initiated military activity remained relatively light during the past week as Communist forces continued preparations for a new round of offensive actions. Intelligence reporting does not provide firm indications of the timing and scope of forthcoming offensive operations, but most evidence still points toward a renewed Communist drive in several parts of South Vietnam around the middle of August.

2. The Communists seem bent on mounting new attacks on Saigon. Any early offensive against Saigon is likely to be limited to a few key targets and accompanied by strong rocket and mortar attacks. The Communists have adequate forces in the vicinity of the capital for such an effort, which probably would be paralleled by large-scale operations in other parts of the country.

The Political Picture

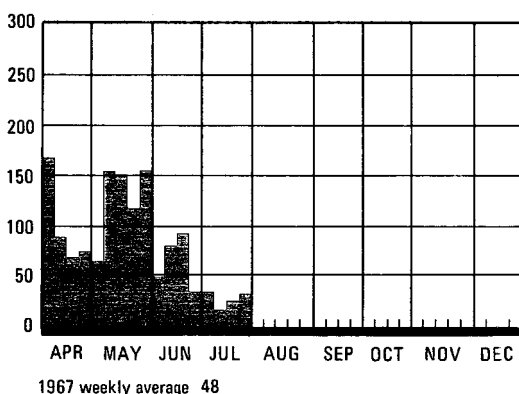
3. North Vietnam's political stance reinforces indications that the Communists are on the verge of another major offensive in South Vietnam. Hanoi appears to have concluded that the Honolulu conference and last week's statements by President Johnson and Secretary Rusk mean its efforts to extract unilateral US concessions have failed. North Vietnamese propaganda argues that the US is still bent on a military solution to the war and implies that additional Communist military pressure is necessary. Ha Van Lau avoided this implication in a secret session with Ambassador Vance on 3 August, but his remarks offered no hope that Hanoi is ready to make any meaningful concessions on the US two-phase proposal for a bombing halt.

4. There are no firm indications of how the Communists plan to move next. It is clear, however, that Hanoi wanted the military lull to be interpreted as a response to US demands for Communist military restraint. Soviet Ambassador Zorin's conversation with Harriman and Vance on 2 August strengthens the conclusion that Hanoi was hopeful that its military posture in the past month and a half would help obtain US concessions. Ha Van Lau's comments to Washington Post correspondent Murray Marder suggest that Hanoi now wants to foster an impression that the US has failed to respond to a period of Communist "restraint" and that the US will be responsible for any subsequent intensification of the war.

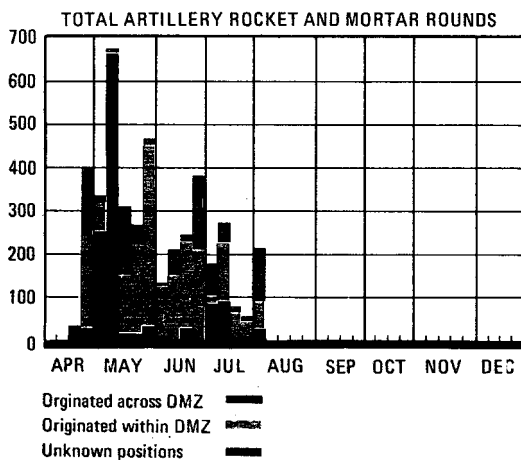
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# **COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968**

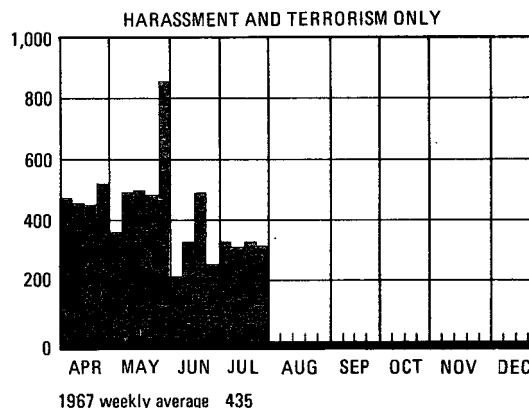
**Enemy Initiated Attacks**



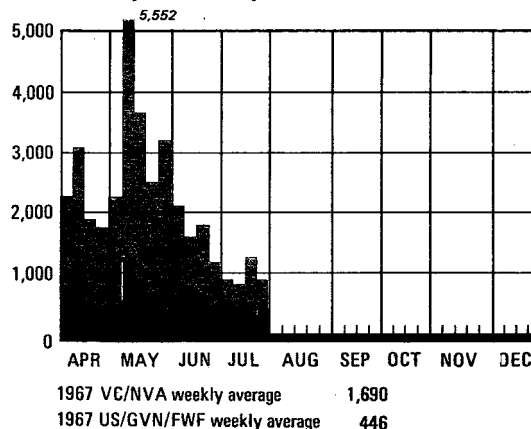
**Heavy Weapons Fire in DMZ Area**



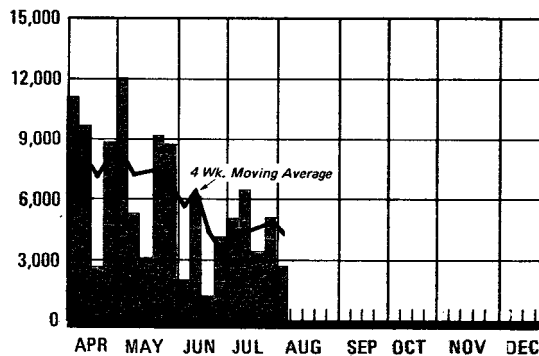
**Enemy Initiated Incidents**



**Friendly and Enemy Forces Killed in Action**



**Deployment of Enemy Forces from the North\***



\*This graph does not depict the arrival of enemy infiltrators in South Vietnam

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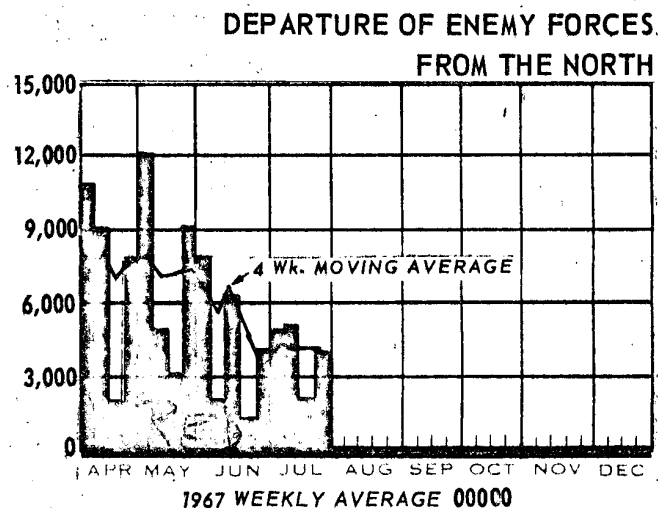
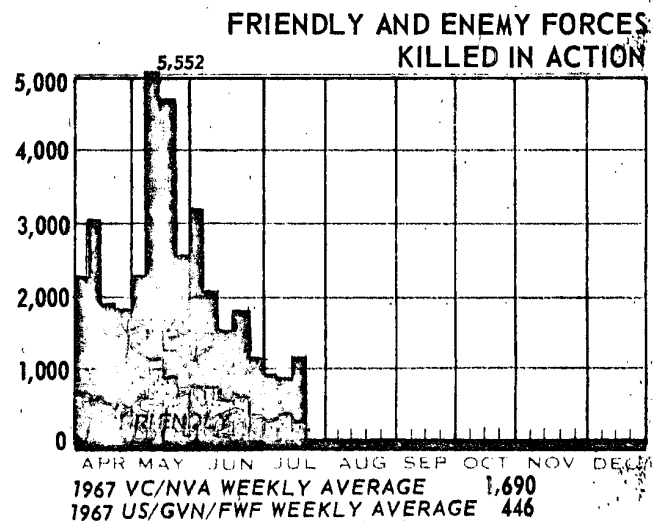
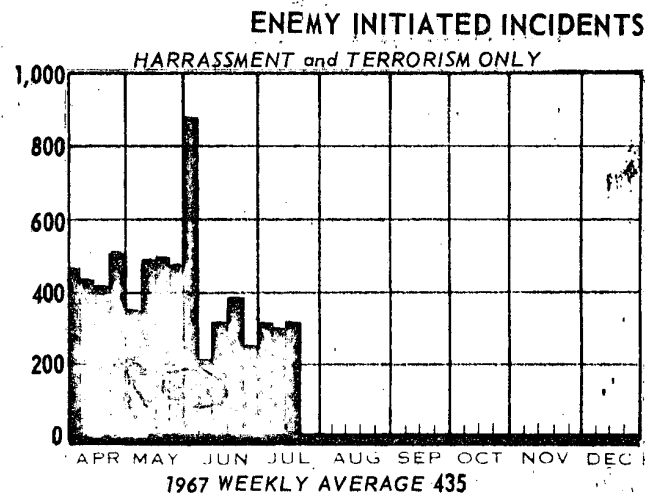
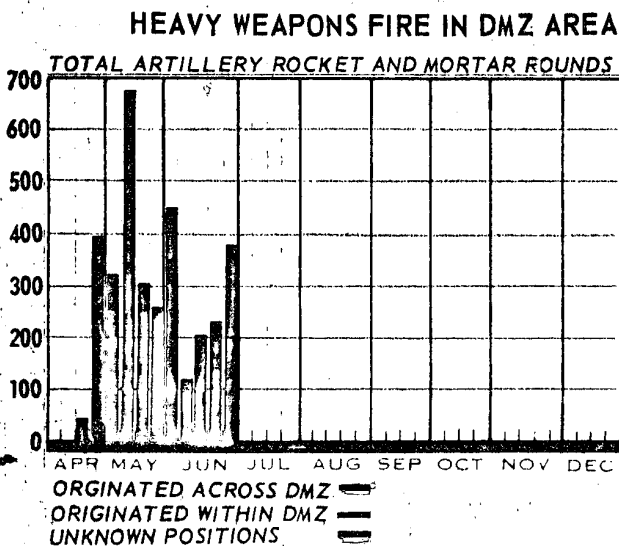
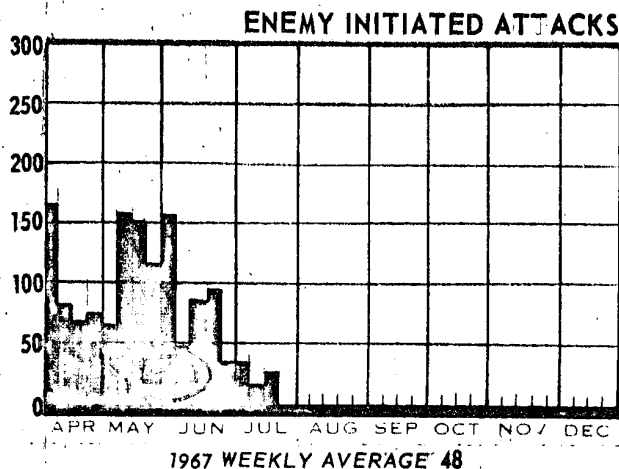
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The tempo of enemy-initiated military activity picked up somewhat in several areas during the week ending 27 July. Harassing rocket and mortar attacks and small-scale ground probes against allied installations occurred in all four corps areas. The overall pattern, however, continued to reflect a general low-level of enemy military activity. The current disposition of main force Communist units suggests that any widespread, coordinated offensive is unlikely before mid to late August. However, major localized actions seem likely in several separate areas before then.

Although the current lull can still be explained largely by military considerations, it has become increasingly apparent that Hanoi wishes the lull--particularly the cessation of rocket attacks on Saigon--to be interpreted as a response to US demands for de-escalation. While maintaining in public that the concept of restraint is unacceptable as long as the bombing continues, the North Vietnamese have pointedly linked their cessation of attacks on Saigon with "intensified" US air raids in private conversations with Harriman and Vance.

# COURSE of the WAR in VIETNAM 1968



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